



# FOCUS

Integration • Inclusion

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For a fair and welcoming French-language community in Ontario

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# About...

## A New Momentum for Francophone Immigration

By: Darlyn Mentor,  
Director, Settlement Programs

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**La Passerelle I.D.É.** is a non-profit  
organization created in response to the  
integration and economic development  
needs of young Francophones from the  
various cultural communities of Greater  
Toronto. Founded in 1993, La Passerelle  
is recognized within the French-speaking  
community for its leadership on issues and  
matters affecting its clientele.  
[www.passerelleide.com](http://www.passerelleide.com)

To consult calls for proposals issued by  
**Citizenship and Immigration Canada**,  
Settlement Directorate, Ontario Region,  
visit [www.etalblissement.org](http://www.etalblissement.org).

In the early months of 2010-11, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) pressed on with its modernized approach to settlement programming. This new multi-stream approach focuses on needs assessment and referrals, information and awareness services, language learning and skills development as well as employment-related services; community connections and support services.

In response to its call for project proposals starting in April 2011, CIC received several funding applications for projects that are in line with its new approach. For each programming stream, priorities were established, a number of which specifically target Francophone minority immigrant communities in an effort to improve outcomes. Priorities include developing strategies to recruit skilled workers and students in order to increase the percentage of French-speaking immigrants in Francophone communities; launching new initiatives promoting the economic integration of newcomers; supporting innovative projects that create social partnerships for women, seniors and young French-speaking immigrants; developing support programs for refugees; and devising alternative delivery models for language learning and skills development courses. CIC is currently evaluating funding applications.

Apart from major changes to settlement programming, the past few months have been marked by the implementation of a number of projects. Particularly noteworthy are the development of French Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) Online for grades 5 to 7 and delivery of French LINC online for levels 3 and 4; training workshops on cultural competencies; the economic consortium for Francophone immigrants in Toronto; the development of a practical conceptual framework for the professional development of teachers of French as a second language; the economic integration of Francophone immigrants into small and medium-sized businesses and through self-employment; and youth workshops.

Two innovative projects have been launched to facilitate the economic and social integration of French-speaking immigrants.

### *Opportunities for All*

In April 2010, the provincial *Réseau de développement économique et d'employabilité de l'Ontario* (RDÉE Ontario) launched a province-wide awareness-raising and economic integration initiative entitled *Opportunities for All*. The goal is to help French-speaking newcomers find employment, or to start their own business.

"Our strategy supports the province's economic recovery by making the most of the pool of vastly under-employed French-speaking intellectual, cultural and social human capital currently at our disposal," said Nicole Sauvé, Executive Director of RDÉE Ontario. For her part, Mariette Carrier-Fraser, President of the *Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario*, believes that the *Opportunities for All* initiative is right on target with the new demographics and will help stimulate growth within Ontario's *francophonie*.

The *Opportunities for All* initiative offers solutions to French-speaking immigrants as well as small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) beset by Ontario's economic challenges. On the SME market, the initiative singles out potential entrepreneurs among newcomers, helping them to develop a business plan and set up their new venture. On the job market, the goal is to educate newcomers about the realities of working in Ontario, train and support them in their efforts to find gainful employment. Activities aimed at SMEs seek to educate employers about the importance of hiring skilled immigrants and support their recruitment efforts.

Already the *Opportunities for All* initiative has reached some 250 businesses. In addition, 14 partnerships have been created with key stakeholders including the Board of Trade of Ontario, Metro News, Kelly Services, the Montfort Hospital and the Royal York Hotel. In the summer of 2010, more than 120 newcomers underwent training and, by then, five participants had either been hired, or started their own business.

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# Promotion, Recruitment and Settlement

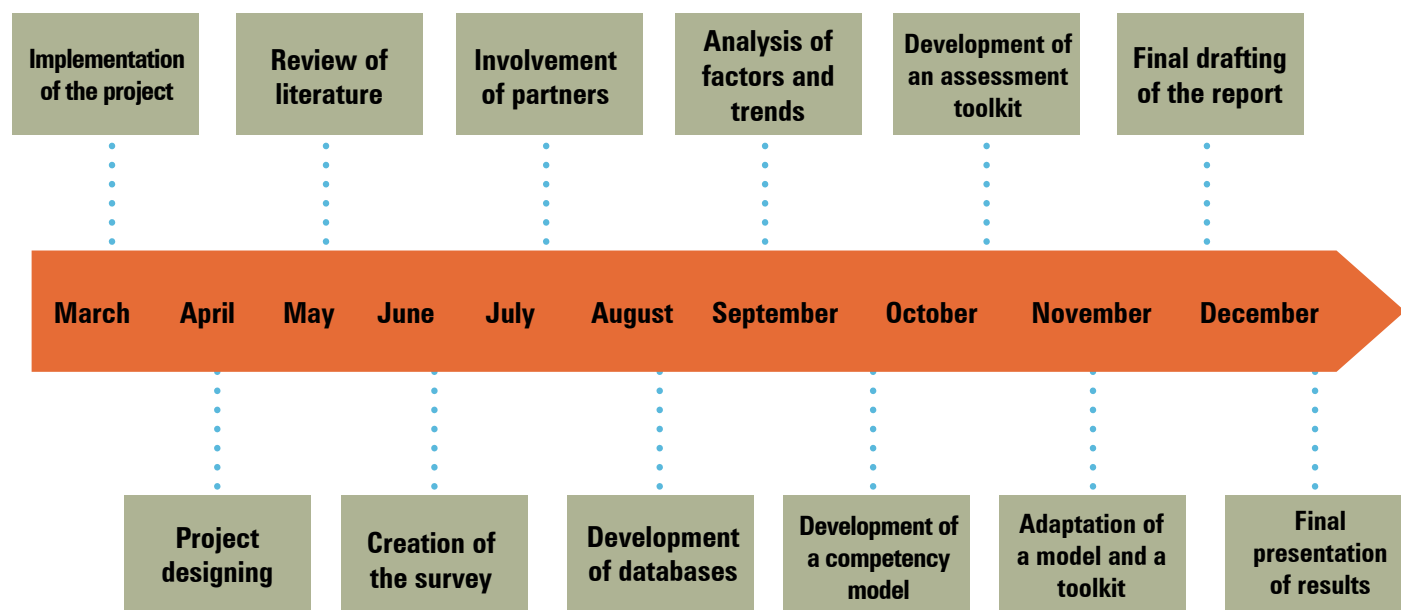
## New for Teachers of FSL in Ontario Professional Language Competency Profile

Both professional training and continuing education for second language teachers are a priority at Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) as part of its settlement programming. And both are a key factor in the continuous improvement of the quality of language training provided to newcomers in Ontario. In light of this, CIC has commissioned Estrie Language School Inc., through a contribution agreement signed in March 2010, to develop a professional language competency profile for teachers of French as a second language (FSL) and a complementary suite of evaluation and self-assessment tools.

The new professional language competency profile will provide a flexible, operational set of standards and management tools, making it possible to structure, identify and coordinate training and professional development activities with a view to improving teaching practices. Competency evaluation tools and the self-assessment toolkit will support the professional development of FSL teachers. These tools will be used to

measure, on a cyclical basis, the differences between “acquired” and “required” competencies along a chronological axis.

Both the profile and the toolkit are intended for all participants whether at the organizational, community or individual level. These tools are designed to help both newly-minted teachers of FSL and the more experienced ones as they follow the continuing education pathway. Teaching faculties and organizations may also find them useful as a basis for sharing expertise and practices. And while evaluation tools will be helpful in recruiting for and staffing new teaching positions, they will undoubtedly be used more to create and implement skills development and training based on the real-world needs of FSL teachers.





## Integration Program for French-language Schools

### Testimonial of a SWIS Team

Our adventure was born out of the suitcases of immigrant families and our desire to help their children integrate successfully into French-language high schools.

We are a SWIS team—Settlement Workers in Schools—and the work we do is a lot like gardening. The soil and water that our figurative garden needs in order to grow are provided by our “6Cs”: Centre francophone de Toronto (CFT) our host organization; Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) which funds the project; Coordination provinciale anglophone et francophone; COPA; Conseil scolaire de district du Centre-Sud-Ouest; and Conseil scolaire de district catholique Centre-Sud. We, the SWIS team, through the settlement work we do in schools, play the role of gardener, especially in connection with SONA.

SONA (Semaine d'orientation des nouveaux arrivants) is the French-language equivalent of NOW, Newcomer Orientation Week, a program that has been running in English-language schools since 2007. SONA provides French-speaking immigrant high school students the opportunity to develop leadership skills from within a solid support structure where they can successfully integrate into school life.

Using the experience we gained working for three years in the English-language system, we adapted the NOW tools and materials to the Francophone reality. In January 2009, we began preparations so we would be ready, in August 2009, to welcome our first students, or sprouts as we affectionately call them. Like good gardeners, we planted seeds in two schools: Monseigneur de Charbonnel Catholic Secondary School and Étienne-Brûlé Secondary School.

In each location, we selected four students, well-integrated and strongly committed youth leaders. And that is how our program became rooted in each school. These recruits were trained in leadership by COPA using the “3C” formula, i.e. collaboration, compassion and courage. Armed with this training, our grade 10, 11 and 12 recruits were ready to take on the role of responsible, respectful and reliable school leaders.

Under the banner of the SONA program, they actively sought out newcomers, informing them and engaging them in various school activities. This helped newcomers to better understand the inner workings of their new school, Canadian culture, and where to access community resources such as public libraries.

In all, 14 young newcomers from different Francophone countries of Africa, the Middle East and Europe took part in the program. Because they were getting all the right nutrients, these young sprouts quickly began to grow in their new environment. And now that they have a firm foothold in their host community, they no longer feel lost or alone; they are flourishing. Through the SONA program, these young people are free to explore their surroundings, receiving support and guidance every step of the way. Soon, they grow more confident and self-assured: they start making new friends, developing leadership abilities and becoming program champions, all of which makes their integration into school that much easier.

Buoyed by this initial success, our team immediately began to plan the arrival of young newcomers in 2010. We came up with the idea of introducing a new feature: SONA Welcome Committees. These committees were set up in April 2010, again with the invaluable support of school administrators and guidance counsellors. Staffed by student champions and settlement workers, these school-based welcome committees hold meetings twice monthly with newcomers. The focus is on awareness-raising and integration through youth leadership in a setting of trust, sharing and mutual respect.

Our SWIS team is pleased with the outcome of this first experiment. School administrators and teaching staff as well as parents have seen and felt the positive impact of the program on the lives and academic performance of participating students. By all accounts, these students have achieved independence faster, with far less difficulty and, as a result, their ties with parents, teachers and settlement workers are stronger.



Photos fournies par l'équipe du Programme TÉE (Travailleurs d'établissement dans les écoles), Centre francophone de Toronto  
[www.centrefranco.org](http://www.centrefranco.org)

Our “garden” is in full bloom, and growing bigger every day. In the spring of 2010, our project was renewed, and we are now active in four high schools. Not only are our plants growing and multiplying, but in September 2010, they bore fruit. The creation of SONA welcoming committees in the high schools where we work is giving us an opportunity to expand efforts and spur new growth in new areas.

Like all good gardeners, we are deeply grateful to have had the essentials in hand in order to produce such beautiful results: rich soil and water, without which nothing would be possible.

The SWIS Program Team  
Centre francophone de Toronto  
[www.centrefranco.org](http://www.centrefranco.org)

## French LINC Online: *Always Evolving*

French Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada Online or French LINC Online provides original content tailored to the specific needs of Francophone minority communities. French LINC Online fits well with CIC's modernized approach, enabling learners to acquire the language skills they need to successfully integrate into Canadian society. Even those living in the more remote regions of Ontario can reap its benefits provided they have Internet access.

### CCLB Mandate

In March 2010, the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (CCLB) was mandated by CIC to push forward with French LINC Online with the development of levels 5, 6 and 7. Readers will recall that the French-language public school board of Eastern Ontario, *Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario* (CEPEO), was commissioned in 2007-2008 to develop levels 3 and 4. (See Summer 2009 edition of FOCUS). The CCLB has a five-part mandate which reads as follows:

- ▶ Review of French LINC levels 3 and 4 in light of the French LINC Online Report (March 2009) to CIC;
- ▶ Design and pilot testing of an administrative structure for the delivery of French LINC Online to Francophone communities in Ontario;
- ▶ Development and validation of a process for recruiting eligible clients;
- ▶ Development and validation of a French LINC Online delivery process;
- ▶ Development and validation of French LINC levels 5, 6 and 7 in accordance with classroom French LINC, French LINC program guidelines and Canadian Language Benchmarks.

To see this important project through to completion, the CCLB has put in place an efficient, dynamic management structure. There is a Management Committee composed of two CIC representatives, the CCLB program manager and the project coordinator. This committee oversees project implementation, validating each work phase and ensuring compliance with CIC guidelines and requirements.

There is also an Advisory Committee with representation from CIC, the Francophone Immigration Support Network of Northern Ontario and the one representing Central and Southwestern Ontario as well as partners, i.e., CEPEO, the National Consortium on e-Learning, Ontario Coalition for Adult Learning, Contact North and the Language Assessment and Referral Centre. This committee provides advice and recommendations on the administrative structure, the recruitment and delivery processes, as well as project implementation.

CCLB Executive Director François Bélisle expressed great pride in the project, stating that the Centre is honoured to contribute to an initiative of this scope, which is so important to Francophone minority communities. The CCLB is the centre of expertise in support of the national standards in English and French for describing, measuring and recognizing second language proficiency of adult immigrants and prospective immigrants for living and working in Canada.

### Pilot Testing

In 2008-2009, pilot testing was conducted in four provinces—Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta and New Brunswick. In 2010 however, this work will be limited to Ontario with the aim of further exploring the capability of French LINC Online to reach learners in remote areas. Outcomes will be assessed and recommendations formulated for each project phase, i.e., review of French LINC levels 3 and 4, design and development of the administrative structure, recruitment and distribution processes, and French LINC Online levels 5, 6 and 7.

### Reaching Out to Communities

With its modernized approach, Citizenship and Immigration Canada has opened the door to a real commitment to provide immigration programs of the highest quality that effectively meet the needs of the population, particularly in Francophone minority communities. The delivery of language training tailored to the needs of newcomers is a key objective of its Settlement Program. French LINC Online is a concrete example of the government's commitment to offer innovative and relevant programming in today's world.

## New Training Initiative in Toronto Economic Integration Workshops for French-speaking Immigrants

*“Newcomers experience a huge culture shock that can last a lifetime, a shock that strongly influences their perceptions, their behaviours and attitudes,” said Jean Pierre Matulu, himself an immigrant and Coordinator of Auberge francophone’s support program for immigrant men. They face a great deal of hardship on the home front, in the labour market, in the education world and in society at large. Many grow to be very frustrated, feeling powerless and alienated.*”



At the July 7, 2010 unveiling, from left to right: Julie Lutete, Farida Mersali, Darlyn Mentor, Annie Dell, Jean Pierre Matulu, Yollande Pitta.

In the summer of 2010, Toronto’s Auberge francophone unveiled an initiative to help French-speaking immigrants, specifically men, overcome integration barriers. The new training workshops, which combine mentoring and coaching, are particularly effective because they address head on the issues that immigrant men typically grapple with as newcomers, e.g., Canadian culture and customs, civic rights, social responsibilities and the place of men in Canadian society. Other hot-button issues include employment and financial management, the Canadian family and lifestyle.

Julie Lutete, Executive Director of Toronto’s Auberge francophone, believes that the process of integrating immigrant men must be economically driven, a view that has won the support of key partners such as the provincial Réseau de développement économique et d’employabilité de l’Ontario (RDÉE Ontario) and the federal government. RDÉE Ontario, a leading community economic development agency in Ontario, is sponsoring the workshops, and Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) is providing funding support.

Staff at Toronto’s Auberge francophone have seen firsthand the results of their alienation. Many immigrant men have no idea what to expect and how to behave when they arrive in Canada. Their beliefs, values and cultural mindset are completely different. Overnight, they have to contend with new laws, new customs, new social rules, a different way of thinking and doing things. Their senses are bombarded from all sides; they feel disoriented and lost. They don’t know who to turn to, or what to do. Some get stuck between two cultures, or fall through the cracks of society. Culture shock and their inability to adapt may lead to disastrous outcomes: overwhelming stress, possibly domestic violence, joblessness, poverty, social isolation. In other words, failure.

According to Darlyn Mentor, Director of Settlement Programs at CIC, Ontario Region, the workshop series is an innovative, well-developed project that promises to deliver clear, measurable and reliable results. She also believes that it would not have been possible without the strong support of RDÉE

Ontario. This organization’s Regional Director for the Southwest Region, Annie Dell, says RDÉE Ontario was convinced of the project’s benefits from the start, because it provides effective tools for successfully integrating newcomers both socially and economically. The mission of Toronto’s Auberge francophone is to guide and support members of French-speaking racial, ethnic and cultural minorities as soon as they set foot in Canada, at every stage of the integration process and in every area of Canadian life. In addition to its international work, the agency offers a wide range of services: settlement and coaching, assistance with job search and placement as well as housing, basic computer courses, translation and interpretation services.





# Francophone Communities

## Statistical Portrait of the French-speaking Immigrant Population outside Quebec: An Outstanding Canadian Achievement!



**By Maxim Jean-Louis**

*Member*

*Steering Committee of Citizenship  
and Immigration Canada (CIC)—  
Francophone Minority Communities  
and Sub-Committee for Ontario*

All good things come to those who wait, they say. No other proverb could better describe the excitement generated by the recent publication of a major Canadian study about Francophone immigration. Entitled *Statistical Portrait of the French-Speaking Immigrant Population outside Quebec* (1991 to 2006), this research by Statistics Canada is unprecedented.

In September of 2006, Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) announced the Strategic Plan to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities. This Plan aims mainly to increase the number of French-speaking immigrants in Francophone minority communities and to ensure their integration.

And two years later came the release of the second Five-Year Action Plan for Official Languages entitled *Roadmap for Canada's Linguistic Duality 2008-2013: Acting for the Future*. In light of the objectives outlined in the Roadmap, one of which reads "to better target issues related to Francophone immigration outside of Quebec," Citizenship and Immigration Canada commissioned Statistics Canada to conduct a study.

The research report contains a wealth of data including graphs and charts, which is sure to please both experts and neophytes. There are also maps showing the distribution of the Canadian-born Francophone population by percentage in metropolitan areas outside Quebec. These tools will guide and facilitate the work of community stakeholders.

This study is actually the ultimate reference work for service providers in Francophone communities across the country striving to improve settlement and integration methods and operations in order to achieve better results. It traces French-language immigration outside Quebec and its recent evolution, detailing its numbers, its geographic distribution as well as its demographic and social characteristics.

Statistics Canada began doing observations and analyses in 1991, when the concept of first official language spoken was first chosen by the federal government in the Official Languages Regulations. This explains why the study could be based mainly on the first official language spoken (FOLS), which is now widely accepted as the criterion for defining language groups in works on official language minorities. The Francophone immigrant population outside Quebec is made up of two groups: those who have only French as their first official language spoken (French FOLS immigrants), and those who have both French and English (French-English FOLS immigrants).

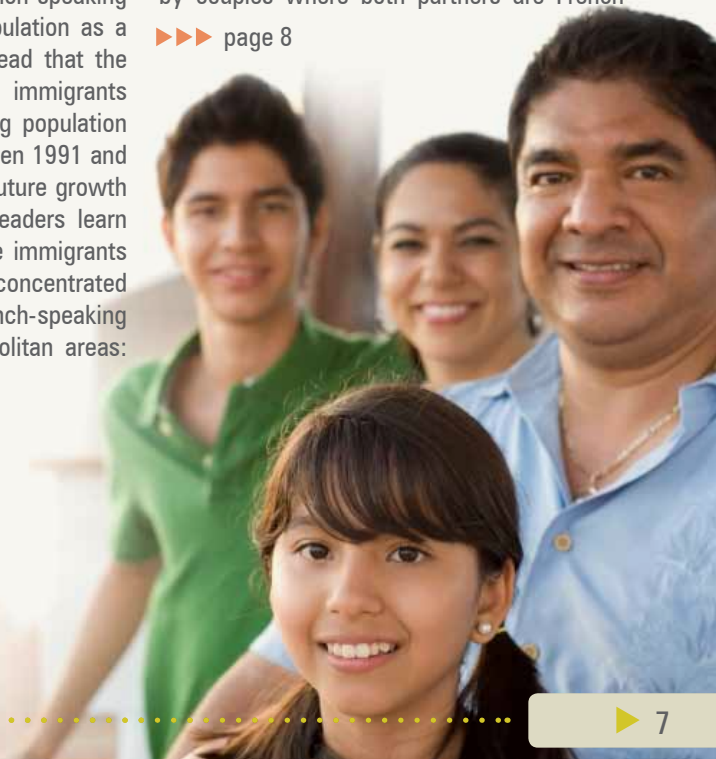
The report first reminds us that the French-speaking immigrant population living outside Quebec is fairly small, both in absolute numbers and in relation to either the French-speaking population or the immigrant population as a whole. But it is heartening to read that the relative weight of Francophone immigrants within the entire French-speaking population climbed from 6.2% to 10% between 1991 and 2006, which is essential to the future growth of Francophone communities. Readers learn that the majority of Francophone immigrants outside Quebec, 70%, are concentrated in Ontario. Two-thirds of French-speaking immigrants live in three metropolitan areas: Toronto, Ottawa and Vancouver.

Sifting through the mass of salient information assembled in this report, we find interesting contrasting data which deserve a closer look and demonstrate the power of this new tool.

For instance, we learn that French FOLS immigrants differ from other immigrants in that a large proportion of them, 26%, come from Africa. Also, the French-speaking immigrant population appears to be a relatively young population when compared to non-Francophone immigrants, as characterized by its large proportion of young people aged 10 to 24 years.

Furthermore, there appears to be an element of competition between French and English spoken at home and used in the workplace. Among French FOLS immigrants, fewer than half say they speak French most often at home, while 32% report speaking English, and 10% a non-official language. And French spoken at home is very widespread among French-English FOLS immigrants. This finding alone justifies the concerted efforts stakeholders are currently making to better integrate French-speaking immigrants into Francophone minority communities. Of course, the transmission of French is done chiefly by couples where both partners are French

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FOLS only. The majority of minor children have French as their mother tongue; it is also the language spoken most often at home and their first spoken official language.

The situation is entirely different for the other types of couples, where transmission of English or a non-official language dominates. Exogamous couples apparently represent a special variable in this equation.

Context is also important. As a mother tongue, French is transmitted to 25% of children, to 34.4% of children as the language spoken at home (language spoken at least regularly at home), and to 36.6% of children as the first official language spoken. And the report presents many other findings that reveal just how competitive the English language is, especially in relation to intergenerational transmission.

Lastly, it is important to note that immigrants with French as their first official language spoken stand out both from Canadian-born Francophones and the rest of the immigrants (French-English FOLS and non-Francophones) in at least two respects: their education level and the characteristics of the diplomas they have earned. They have an education level similar to that of French-English FOLS immigrants, but higher than that of Canadian-born Francophones and non-Francophone immigrants. This is true for both men and women. French FOLS immigrants also differ in that a larger proportion of them earned their diploma or certificate in Canada. Normally, this should mean they can more easily integrate, but to do so, they must have an adequate knowledge of English as a working language.

This is but a brief overview of a very comprehensive report, but already, just on the strength of the few findings presented here, we can see the many and different uses this new research offers. The data found in the maps and on every page are so precise that they can actually guide efforts on the ground on a neighbourhood by neighbourhood or city by city basis.

True, some findings may be harder to accept than others. Nonetheless, overall, the report shows us that the glass is half full and it is gradually getting fuller. We all know that foreign immigration will be the main growth factor for the Canadian population for years to come, and that our country's linguistic profile depends on it. It is incumbent upon us to learn from the new data so that we will have the knowledge to respond effectively to the challenges and realities facing our communities, our provinces and territories and employers across Canada.

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### Coordination of the French-language SWIS program

In 2009-10, CIC set up coordination of the French-language Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) program. This initiative is run by COPA, a provincial Francophone non-profit organization dedicated to preventing child abuse through education and skill-building. COPA will develop a global vision of an integrated system to ensure the continuity of SWIS services. Its mission is to consolidate and expand structures and services, in French, in Ontario schools, in addition to providing the necessary resources and fostering a meaningful dialogue between the Francophone and Anglophone SWIS networks, Ontario's *francophonie*, including school boards, schools, community organizations, students, young newcomers and their families.

A comprehensive assessment, now nearing completion, will identify gaps at the organizational level, within local service delivery structures and Francophone communities. Service delivery models to be developed will address key issues such as the special needs of French-

speaking newcomers, French-language service requirements and effective ways of collecting data on newcomers attending French-language schools. Linkage to the SWIS network and strategies to increase its overall visibility will also be addressed.

Now that coordination has been set up, the French-language SWIS program has expanded significantly over the past year. Francophone communities in London, Chatham and Sarnia are now on board in addition to several more schools. Currently, the program is running in 18 schools in Toronto, 13 in Ottawa, 7 in London, 5 in Chatham, 4 in Sarnia and 2 in Windsor. In all, eight new instructors have been trained; they in turn will train new recruits. In addition, some 50 students will be responsible for introducing newcomers in their school to the program.

The number of schools participating in the second edition of the Newcomer Orientation Week has jumped from 4 to 11. And this year for the benefit of grade 7 and 8 students, a new activity entitled Newcomer Orientation Day has been added to the

SWIS program. Several promotional resources have been developed including banners, posters, postcards and information kits. Two more resources are currently under development: a film entitled *Between Two Worlds* dedicated to the experiences of young newcomers in Ontario and a web site to promote the SWIS program.

The *Opportunities for All* initiative and coordination of the French-language SWIS program are key elements of a sophisticated approach that keeps evolving in step with demographic, economic and social changes occurring within Francophone minority communities. The implementation of the modernized approach to settlement programming has generated new momentum. Indeed, we are seeing, and will continue to see, the birth of new and always more innovative projects designed to address the specific economic, social and cultural needs of French-speaking newcomers.



## 400 Years of French Presence in Ontario

### A Promising Future

On July 8, 2010, at the French Embassy in Ottawa, Mariette Carrier-Fraser, President of the *Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario* (AFO), delivered a speech that provided an overview of the proud past, present and promising future of Ontario's *francophonie*. The presentation was made at the behest of His Excellency Mouldi SAKRI, Ambassador of Tunisia, also Coordinator for the Group of Heads of French diplomatic missions accredited to Ottawa.

With her two Vice-Presidents on hand, Brigitte Chatué and Marc Ryan, the AFO President retraced the milestones of Ontario's *francophonie* from 1610 to 2010. She recounted not only its many trials, but also its greatest triumphs. And as she spoke of modern-day issues, she singled out Francophone immigration as probably its greatest challenge yet.

**Francophones actually represent 4.8 per cent of the total Ontario population, close to 600,000 people**

In June 2009, to better reflect the evolution and diversity of Ontario's *francophonie*, the Ontario government adopted a new, more inclusive definition of the province's Francophone population. This new definition captures those whose mother tongue is neither French nor English, but who have a particular knowledge of French as an Official Language and use French at home, including many recent immigrants to Ontario. According to the new definition, Francophones actually represent 4.8 per cent of the total Ontario population, close to 600,000 people.

In her presentation, Mariette Carrier-Fraser pointed out that the benefits of immigration extend far beyond a statistical variation in demographic data. Francophone immigration not only greatly enhances French culture throughout Ontario, it also helps to ensure the continued delivery of and

access to quality French-language services across the province. Hence, she said, the need for Francophone communities to work on eliminating barriers so that French-speaking immigrants can successfully integrate.

On this particular point, the AFO President noted that the lack of French-language settlement and integration structures often drives French-speaking newcomers to English-language or so-called bilingual services. There is no denying that this seriously hampers integration into the Francophone community. She emphasized the importance of ensuring that, upon arrival, French-speaking immigrants and refugees can access Ontario programs and services in the language of their choice. In order for this to happen, the community's voice must be heard; the community must be more involved in the development of guidelines on immigration policies and the setting up of appropriate structures. Every single person has an important role to play in this process. She also underscored the fact that French-speaking racial, ethnic and cultural minority communities have taken action, setting clear priorities so that their members, and the Francophone population as a whole, can not only survive, but thrive in Ontario.

**41.2% of them were born in Africa, 23.2% in Asia, and a lesser but still considerable number in the Caribbean and the Middle East.**

Ontario's Francophone population is increasingly diversified due to a significant increase in the number of French-speaking immigrants. According to Statistics Canada, their numbers have substantially increased since 1996. Between that date and 2006, the proportion of foreign-born Francophones rose from 4.8% to 16.6%. The province is now home to some 70% of French-speaking immigrants outside Quebec. Statistics on members of French-speaking racial, ethnic and cultural minorities indicate that 41.2% of them were born in Africa, 23.2% in Asia, and a lesser but still considerable number in the Caribbean and the Middle East.



# Economy - Jobs - Recognition

## The 4,000 Bilingual Jobs Fair: Highly Effective Recruitment Formula

The 4,000 Bilingual Jobs Fair, a recruitment initiative spearheaded by Career Net, achieved record numbers of participation. More than 20 community and government partners, including Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), were mobilized to take part in two major bilingual job fairs, one in Toronto on October 7 and 8, 2009, and the second in Ottawa on March 29 and 30, 2010. The fairs, which were held at a time when the economic crisis was spreading fear and uncertainty across the province and beyond, were seen as an effective way of boosting prospects for employers, job seekers, French-speaking immigrants and newcomers alike.

Timing turned out to be perfect, but at the planning stage, no one could have predicted that the course of events would not only show that the job fairs were a great idea, but that they were an absolute must. So in the face of mounting economic uncertainty, Career Net took on the challenge of organizing these two events on a large scale.

In both Toronto and Ottawa, the events presented employers from different sectors of activity with a unique opportunity to scout and recruit skilled bilingual talent. The fair was the perfect showcase: it highlighted the many employment opportunities available in the bilingual job market, something that may have been overshadowed by the financial crisis. Job seekers in attendance were finding not only new employment prospects, but also learning opportunities thanks to workshops and expert panel discussions on job search strategies, effective communication tools for tapping into the labour force and employment support programs.

The vast majority of participants (95%) expressed satisfaction with the events. **In Toronto**, 97 employers and agencies attended the fair, occupying 85 booths grouped into four sectors (public, private, non-profit, self-employed). A total of 1,458 candidates took part in the two-day event. Some 650 grade 12 students from immersion and French-language



schools were also in attendance. Recruitment results were outstanding: 1,355 candidates were interviewed (93%); 1,109 were hired, which is more than 80%. Online participation was also positive: 2,838 job applications were received, including 1,923 from Ontario. Of the 949 applications from the Greater Toronto Area, 763 candidates were hired. The Toronto fair resulted in the **hiring of 1,872 job seekers**.

**In Ottawa**, 55 employers attended the fair: 37 from the private sector, 4 from the public sector, and 14 from the non-profit sector. Some 1,823 people attended the event over a two-day span. Results show that 79% of candidates, 1,441 in all, took part in a job interview. Of those interviewed, 1,036 candidates (72%) received a job offer. According to the final tally, **1,009 job seekers were hired**, or 70% of the 1,441 candidates who were interviewed.

In both cities, the fair generated economic spin-offs. Following the event, many organizations reported increased demand for their services, e.g., language training, continuing education, job placement. A number of organizations seized the opportunity to establish strategic alliances with participating businesses to expand or strengthen their capabilities.

The fairs were made possible thanks to funding support from CIC and the ongoing involvement of community and government partners.

Photos of the fairs were supplied by Career Net.



## Job/Skills Matching Program for Newcomers: *A Necessity*

Many come to Canada believing that here they will find their dream job and a better life. But despite the experience and skills newcomers bring with them, they face a completely different reality when they go out looking for employment. What they end up with is the feeling they didn't get all the pieces needed to solve the Canadian puzzle.

Some are disappointed, others become disillusioned. Lacking information, tools and basic training, they make do with low-paying jobs just to survive. A number of immigrants will take the lengthy and costly path of advanced learning, going to college or university and working a low-paying job at the same time to keep their family fed and sheltered. Their goal? To earn a Canadian degree at all costs because they are convinced this is the key to finding a job that matches their skill level. But even with a Canadian degree in hand, these newcomers, who often post a superior academic performance, are unable to sell themselves on the Canadian job market.

La Cité collégiale offers a solution to this dilemma: a job/skills matching program thanks to funding support from the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration and Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Under this program, foreign-trained professionals enrolled at the college are coached, trained and equipped so they can integrate the labour market faster and work in their chosen field of expertise.

### Tailored to Newcomers

The program was designed to help all foreign-trained professionals who are final year students at La Cité collégiale. Newcomers enrolled in a program offered by La Cité des Affaires and all other students not attending this college, but residing in Ontario are also eligible.

The job/skills matching program is based on real life experience and employer feedback about attitudes and behaviours observed firsthand in the workplace. In workshops, newcomers learn about the realities of the job market, employer expectations, and are taught the do's and don'ts of selling themselves to a prospective employer. Since April 2009, the program start-up date, more than 30 workshops have been developed to help newcomers tackle the social, political, economic, cultural and vocational issues that are holding them back. Geography, language, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, employment market trends, verbal communication, body language, job search strategies, résumé preparation and job interviews—all these issues and more are addressed so that immigrants can more successfully and quickly integrate into the labour market.

As part of its program, La Cité collégiale also provides various forms of support, i.e., assistance in finding internships and the job search process. Support continues in the form of coaching once program participants are hired, a factor that increases their chances of succeeding in the workplace.





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**Success Stories**

The case of Adzo Badji illustrates how relevant the training provided under the job/skills matching program really is. Having left Togo in West Africa six years ago, Adzo had yet to find employment in her field (business administration and finance). After several unsuccessful attempts, she took a basic health care course to become a medical attendant at Ottawa's Elizabeth Bruyère Continuing Care and Saint-Louis Residence, only to find out this was not for her. She then decided to train with La Cité collégiale as a health care worker under the professional development program for newcomers. This is how she found out about the job/skills matching program. She enrolled in several workshops, including those dealing with cultural diversity and preparing for employment. Now a health care worker at Montfort Hospital, Adzo Badji is happy on her new path and brimming with self-confidence.

Here is another case in point which turned out great for three other student immigrants. In March 2010, La Cité collégiale organizers, specifically with the Access to Construction Trades Program for Immigrants and the job-specific language training program, hosted a networking event matching up foreign-trained immigrant professionals with area employers. Participants had completed a training session on networking, interviewing and self-marketing techniques beforehand. So they were ready to network; they also had their business cards and CVs in hand. All three landed a job in their field of expertise: G. Bernard enrolled in a training program as a welder-fitter; Mohamed Kulmiyeh was hired by Labor Tek, and Walter Ndala Mukendi was recruited by ASHCROFT Homes.

**More than Job-Readiness**

La Cité collégiale's job/skills matching program goes beyond mere preparation for employment. Using a holistic approach, the college helps foreign-trained immigrants not only to find employment more quickly, but to find the right job, in their chosen field of expertise, a job that matches their skill level as well as their personal, social and professional ambitions.

For more information, visit  
[www.lacitec.on.ca](http://www.lacitec.on.ca).

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These priorities, which were established in consultation with and adopted by the AFO, are as follows:

- ▶ To strengthen the capacities of organizations dedicated to serving racial, ethnic and cultural minority communities;
- ▶ To recognize the Francophone identity of French-speaking racial, ethnic and cultural minorities;
- ▶ To integrate members of racial, ethnic and cultural minority communities in the labour force;
- ▶ To set up French-speaking racial, ethnic and cultural minority service-oriented institutions.

All of these priorities are in line with, and part of the priorities set forth by Ontario's Francophone population via the AFO.

Dignitaries expressed much interest in the issues raised and sincere admiration for Ontario's francophonie. Many were hearing this information for the first time. His

Excellency François Delattre, Ambassador of France to Canada, was pleased that his colleagues showed as much interest as he did in the many efforts being made by the AFO to preserve, protect and promote the French language and culture in Ontario. In the spirit of mutual cooperation, the Ambassador committed to exploring the possibility of setting up a platform between the Heads of French Diplomatic Missions and the AFO, as an advocate of the Franco-Ontarian community, to discuss,

share and collaborate on issues of mutual interest.

This event, which was highly rewarding for all parties involved, marks the beginning of a new era of collaboration.

*Salimatou Diallo in collaboration with  
Marianne Carrier-Fraser (AFO)*



# Regionalization

## News from the Northern Network

The Francophone Immigration Support Network of Northern Ontario held its third annual Forum in March 2010, in Sudbury, which was a milestone event. Every year, key stakeholders from across the region gather to review a year filled with activities, to assess progress, to address needs and issues as well to prioritize actions. The 2010 edition also marked the 400th anniversary of the French presence in Ontario and the centennial of the *Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario* (AFO).

Close to 100 participants representing the partner agencies working in the five regions of Northern Ontario were in attendance. Also on hand were representatives of all three levels of government, various institutions and all segments of the Francophone community.

The goal of the 2010 edition was to adapt the priorities of Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), Ontario Region, to the reality of Northern Ontario and the specific needs of its communities. All across the region, stakeholders are clearly continuing to work hard to make Francophone immigration a positive experience at every stage and in every respect. In a workshop setting, experts from different levels—local, provincial and federal—each addressed one of four key priorities: economic integration, capacity-building in Francophone organizations serving immigrants, creation of a one-stop shop, and welcoming communities.

### Economic Integration A Top Priority

Since economic integration is a priority in 2010-11 and maintaining close collaboration with service providers a necessity, the Northern Network has increased its involvement in this priority area.

Network representatives have attended key meetings held in conjunction with the *Opportunities for All* initiative, including an important round table discussion with employers in June 2010. This provincial

awareness and economic integration initiative was launched by RDÉE Ontario in the spring of 2010, with funding support from CIC. The *Opportunities for All* initiative offers solutions both to newcomers seeking employment and employers looking for new talent. (For details, read CIC's message on page 2.)

Such meetings and activities present opportunities to strengthen the Network's ties to key stakeholders, such as *Contact interculturel francophone de Sudbury* (CIFS). In fact, the CIFS and the Network have joined efforts to educate employers about the importance of hiring skilled immigrants and to update the databank of French-language employers. Both organizations have also pledged to refer newcomers to the *Opportunities for All* team of business agents for assistance.

### French LINC in the North

Beginning in September 2010, French-speaking immigrants living in Northern Ontario can access French LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) Online. The Northern Network, which is a member of the French LINC Online Advisory Committee, is very pleased with this development. Adult learners can now receive basic language training to facilitate their integration into Northern Ontario's economic, social and cultural life.

With the support and collaboration of CIFS and working under time pressure, the Northern Network helped recruit six newcomers eligible for French LINC, levels 3 and 4. Efforts are also being made to recruit participants for levels 5, 6 and 7 starting in October 2010.

### Collaboration with LIPs

Last spring in London, the Northern Network was also represented at the Conference on Local Immigration Partnerships (LIP), as were the other Francophone Immigration Support Networks in Ontario. The Conference was organized by the Welcoming Communities Initiative. In our presentation, we defined the role of the Northern Network, stressing the importance of working in partnership, in coordinated fashion, at the local level throughout the region.

## Destination Canada



The 2010 edition of Destination Canada will be held in November, in Paris and Brussels, followed by a recruitment event in Tunisia. To ensure Northern Ontario employers are well represented, the Northern Network has contacted various institutions and promoted the upcoming opportunity to employers across the region. A Northern Network representative also attended an information session in Toronto, on September 13, 2010, to discuss recruitment opportunities. This session, in preparation for Destination Canada, is organized by the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development and Trade and Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Ontario Region.

## Update from the Eastern Network

The Eastern Network began operating in Eastern Ontario in 2007, concentrating its efforts in Ottawa, Cornwall and Kingston. Coordination work involves encouraging partnerships between local organizations; each partnership has its own dynamics and pace. In recent years, the Network has set up a number of promising partnerships with organizations such as Ottawa's *Franco-Présence Coopérative*, which offers socio-cultural programming. We have a partnership with La Cité collégiale to encourage immigrant students to take up building trades. We also work in partnership with the University of Guelph, Alfred Campus to promote trades in rural areas around Cornwall. And another partnership effort has led to the organization of an information session with immigrants in Kingston to promote career opportunities in the hospitality industry.

Throughout 2010-11, the Eastern Network is involved in various projects, including a study on Francophone Immigration in Kingston and Cornwall as well as in the counties of Stormont-Dundas-Glengarry and Prescott-Russell. Research findings will help service providers to better understand the challenges faced by Francophone immigrants and to find ways of improving settlement and integration services. A directory of Cornwall service providers dedicated to French-speaking immigrants is also in the works. And, on the social scene, French bistro evenings are planned to promote cultural exchanges between the host community and newcomers.

Network coordination efforts extend to other levels and areas. These include active participation in consultation sessions led by Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPs) in Ottawa, Kingston, Belleville and Peterborough. Network representatives also sit on various committees and boards of member organizations, in addition to participating in a variety of cultural events, as well as activities that promote the hiring of immigrants.

*French-speaking immigrants who settle in Francophone minority communities face an uphill battle. They must adapt to a new country and a different way of doing things. They must integrate into a new host community; finding housing and employment are the biggest challenges. In parts of Eastern Ontario, there is a real need to educate employers about the importance of attracting, hiring and retaining skilled immigrants, which is good for business and for the economy at the provincial and national levels.*

As a regional network committed to supporting Francophone immigration, we are in this for the long run. This kind of commitment requires a long-term vision, patience and understanding. Every day, we go about our mission with confidence and conviction, and the ongoing support of local partners, both Francophone and Anglophone. Our work is predicated on collaboration: collaboration with the various levels of government and host communities across Eastern Ontario.

### Food for Thought

Five new regional reports released this year by the Ontario Trillium Foundation reveal the demographic trends of Ontario's Francophone community in Toronto and in regions of Eastern, Northeastern and Southwestern Ontario.

- ▶ The Francophone community is increasingly diverse. In Toronto, it mirrors more and more the diversity of the city with one in three Francophones belonging to a visible minority. That ratio is 9% in Champlain and 6.8% in Southwestern Ontario.
- ▶ The Francophone community in Northeastern and Southwestern Ontario is decreasing and faces challenges due to its aging population and a proportionately low number of children and youth.
- ▶ The Champlain region is home to the province's largest Francophone community, with over a quarter million people. While Francophones earn slightly more than other Champlain residents, there are substantial income gaps for visible minority Francophones.
- ▶ Although Francophones are a small proportion of the city's total population, Toronto has one of the largest Francophone communities in Ontario with more than 53,000 Francophone residents.
- ▶ Over 66% of Ontario's Francophones use French at work. This proportion is notably higher in Champlain with 86.4%.



## News from the Central and Southwestern Network

### Social and Economic Integration: Top Priority

In its 2010-11 Action Plan, the Francophone Immigration Support Network responsible for Central and Southwestern Ontario is putting the bulk of its support behind the most promising economic development initiatives. The Network is especially interested in projects that combine entrepreneurship and job creation with community involvement in order to facilitate the economic integration of French-speaking immigrants, or in initiatives that seek to improve their economic prospects. In this edition of FOCUS, the Network highlights three such projects currently underway, namely the Niagara Agricultural Development Project, the Samaritan Cooperative, and the COUMO Sewing Cooperative. They are the result of outstanding collaboration and partnership between immigrants and community organizations, with support from the Network and RDÉE Ontario, a provincial organization that fosters community economic development.



### Niagara Agricultural Development Project

Launched as a pilot project in July 2009, the Community Garden Project, as it was called initially, had three main objectives:

- ▶ to demonstrate the agricultural feasibility of producing indigenous African vegetables in the Niagara region;
- ▶ to give immigrants and newcomers an opportunity to put their agricultural knowledge and know-how into practice;
- ▶ to first grow the business into an immigrant-owned and managed agricultural cooperative, then, to set up an exotic foods distribution cooperative through *Solidarité des femmes immigrantes francophones du Niagara* (SOFIFRAN), a business coalition of French-speaking immigrant women.

Results have confirmed the feasibility of this agricultural venture. So the project has entered phase two, which involves producing, marketing and selling vegetables to target markets in the Niagara region. The new agricultural products will be introduced to local and regional markets through promotional and cooking demonstrations as well as tasting activities. The entrepreneurial farming group is very excited at having reached this stage and believes the new venture has tremendous potential.

The group owns a parcel of land as well as a greenhouse in the town of Welland (all generously donated by a farmer). The project has received funding for its administration from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, with technical support from RDÉE Ontario. Administration will be handled by Club 2000 Niagara, and a coordinator has been hired. Training workshops are currently being developed.

### COUMO Sewing Cooperative

Burlington-based COUMO is an initiative of immigrant women of African descent in the Halton Region. In their countries of origin, these women had worked in the fashion

*"These latest reports are an essential tool to boost the impact of our grants, allowing us to be strategic on how funds are allocated and priorities are set to best support Ontario's communities. We are pleased to have been able to use the information provided by the long-form census from Statistics Canada. Our Foundation and indeed Ontario's communities and not-for-profit sector rely on this unique source of information about populations, languages, employment, income and education at the community level."*

- L. Robin Cardozo, CEO,  
Ontario Trillium Foundation



industry and clothing trade. When they first got to Canada, they earned their living doing odd jobs here and there. Since then, they have decided to improve their economic prospects by setting up a sewing cooperative where they can put their talent to work.

Much remains to be done to make the business a success, but the group is determined to achieve its goals with the support of the Network and technical guidance from RDÉE Ontario. Also, the Ontario Trillium Foundation has awarded funding for a market study, which is currently underway. This should lead to the development of a strong business plan. At this rate, the Halton region will soon have its first immigrant-owned and managed sewing cooperative. The Cooperative will stimulate job creation by, for and with immigrants, in addition to generating revenue. This is great news for our communities. The initiative is also very encouraging on another front: as a model of community economic development, it could encourage others to pursue their entrepreneurial dreams.

### The Samaritan Cooperative

In the Peel region, part of the Greater Toronto Area, the Samaritan Cooperative, with our Network's active collaboration, has launched a community garden venture. The immigrant women who formed the Cooperative are growing vegetables including parsley, onions, tomatoes and callaloo, a very popular vegetable in Africa, the Antilles and the Caribbean.

This is a major agricultural venture that will rally the community around home-grown economic development and link the Cooperative directly to its consumer base. In addition to generating revenue, the project will give workers an opportunity to develop marketing skills in the sale of exotic agricultural products. Eventually, farming knowledge and know-how will be transferred to the next generation within the community. The Cooperative currently owns a parcel of land in a Brampton suburb. A recruitment campaign is underway to put together the team of women who will lead the business. In its supporting role, the Network supplies tools and seeds, while administrative and technical support is being provided by RDÉE Ontario and *Conseil des coopératives de l'Ontario* (CCO).

### Promising New Projects

These projects hold great promise and are a testament to the great entrepreneurial spirit of French-speaking immigrants living in Southwestern Ontario. Our Network, in collaboration with its partners, including RDÉE Ontario, will continue to support such initiatives, which are made possible by the funding support of leading funding agencies such as the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

